

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 are pending, Claims 1-4, and 8 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-8 were rejected as being unpatentable over Notermans et al (U.S. Patent No. 4,843,571, hereinafter Notermans) in view of Collard et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,825,988, hereinafter Collard).

The undersigned appreciatively acknowledges the interview granted by Examiner Popovici on June 13, 2000. At this interview, Examiner Popovici indicated that feature highlighted in the amendments made by way of the present amendment appears to distinguish over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the pending claims should be allowed pending an updated search.

Before turning to the rejection on the merits, a brief review of the present invention is in order. The Applicant has identified flexibility and security problems with conventional network print systems. In particular, the Applicant has recognized that a user must select one of the network printers as a prerequisite for printing. The impact of this limitation is that the print output is directed to the selected printer without regard to the availability of the printer. Additionally, the Applicant has recognized that inadvertent or intentional disclosure of confidential documents is a concern with conventional network printing systems. To address these shortcomings, the Applicant has invented a network printing method and system that will enable users to issue print requests, that do not uniquely identify a device for printing the request, from their computer terminals. By not uniquely identifying the output device in the print request message, the users of the present invention can associate a particular printer, that they have found

to be available or otherwise preferable to them, to the print request message by inputting the print request job number at that particular printer, causing that particular printer to print the request. Moreover, the Applicant has recognized that by password protecting the execution of the print request, the security problems that have been identified in conventional network printing systems can be overcome. Furthermore, the user is able to "guard" the document as it is being printed at the printer.

The pending claims are rejected as being unpatentable over Notermans in view of Collard. As noted in the outstanding Office Action, Notermans fails to disclose the use of a job number to correspond to a particular print request. Furthermore, Notermans fails to disclose the use of a password to protect against the unauthorized execution of a particular print request. The Applicant submits that neither of these references teach or suggest a system where the print request message can be produced that does not uniquely identify a device for printing the request, and the execution of the print request, at any particular printer on the network as determined by the user, are both under the total control of the user. In other words, neither of these references disclose, teach, or suggest a method or system where a user can, as one action, issue a print request message from his terminal, and, as a second independent action, find a desirable printer of the network, cause the print request to be associated with that particular printer by inputting the print request job number at that printer, and have that particular printer execute the print request.

Independent Claims 1-4, and 8 have been amended to clarify the claimed invention. In particular, these claims have been amended to clarify that the print request message does not uniquely identify a device for printing the image data, and further, that only by inputting the job number at a particular printer does that particular printer become associated with the print request message. In light of this clarification, it is clear that the print request and the execution of the

print request can be viewed as distinct operations. It is this separation that allows the invention to address both the flexibility concerns and the security concerns of conventional network print systems.

Notermans discloses a system that causes a print request to be interrupted until a second command is received by the printer. Such an approach allows the user to configure the printer for a special job or alternatively, to co-locate himself with the printer prior to the commencement of the print request. Amended Claim 1 requires a system where the print request message does not uniquely identify a device for printing the image data. Therefore, the system of Claim 1, as amended, can execute a print request from any printer connected to the host processor by associating a particular printer with the print request message by inputting the job number of the print request at that particular printer. Notermans does not describe a system where the print request can be executed from any printer connected to a host computer. Rather, Notermans is directed to a different system that creates print requests that predetermine the output device for printing the request, thereby requiring that the destination printer be prospectively determined when the print request is initiated from a computer terminal.

Collard is asserted for teaching the use of a file name as a go-ahead print command causing a stored data file with that file name to be printed. The outstanding Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the print system art to modify Notermans to use a job number as an identity code for causing a particular print job to execute. Collard discloses a system that allows a print request to be stored in memory until a second command is received by the printer. Such an approach allows the user to control the timing and order of the execution of the print jobs held in memory since each file to be printed is uniquely identified by a file name, and printed from memory only when that file name is given as a go-ahead command from the printer. As discussed above, amended Claim 1 requires a system

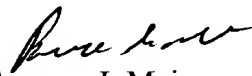
where the print request message does not uniquely identify a device for printing the image data. Therefore, the system of Claim 1, as amended, can execute a print request from any printer connected to the host processor by associating a particular printer with the print request message by inputting the job number of the print request at that particular printer. Collard does not describe a system where the print request can be executed from any printer connected to a host computer. Rather, Collard is directed to a different system that requires that creates print requests that predetermine the output device for printing the request, thereby requiring that the destination printer be prospectively determined when the print request is initiated from a computer terminal.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that no matter how Notermans and Collard are combined, the references do not teach or suggest the system of amended Claim 1, and therefore, do not render obvious amended Claim 1. Because amended Claim 2 contains similar limitations as amended Claim 1, and because amended Claim 2 contains a further limitation of password protection which, as mentioned above, is not taught by Notermans, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Notermans and Collard does not teach or suggest the system of amended Claim 2. Furthermore, and in light of the proceeding comments, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Notermans and Collard does not teach or suggest the system or methods of amended independent Claims 3, 4, and 8. Because Claims 5-7 depend from amended Claim 4, it is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims also patentably define over the combination of Notermans and Collard.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, and in light of the above comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-8, as amended, is patentably distinguishing over the prior art. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Registration No. 25,599
Attorney of Record
Bradley D. Lytle
Registration No. 40,073



22850

Tel. No. (703) 413-3000
Fax No. (703) 413-2220
GJM:BDL:EDG:fb1
I:\atty\tj\0557\05574308.am.2.wpd